

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4101,  
AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND DRUG  
ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED  
AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS  
ACT, 1999

SPEECH OF

**HON. DOUG BEREUTER**

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 2, 1998*

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, this Member rises to express his concerns about the inadequacy of the emergency farm relief package in the conference report for H.R. 4101. This Member would like to begin by expressing his appreciation to the distinguished gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. SKEEN) and the distinguished gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) for their diligent work in crafting this legislation.

Although this legislation includes important emergency aid provisions for farmers, this Member believes that it is inadequate to address the enormous needs of agricultural producers who are reeling from depressed commodity prices across the board. Most of the assistance available under this agriculture relief package is targeted toward farmers who have suffered natural disaster and multi-year losses. As a result, it will offer little help to farmers in most agricultural states, such as Nebraska, who are harvesting good crops but encountering drastically lower prices.

Unfortunately, this Member does not believe that the \$1.65 billion in the package for market loss assistance is adequate to compensate producers. Since it represents a 29 percent increase over the AMTA payment received by producers in FY98, it is a good first step. However, the 1996 Farm Act was based on the premise of expanding international markets for the commodities produced by our nation's farmers. This clearly has not happened. Certainly, one of the root causes of the current low commodity prices is the recent economic down-turn. Nobody could predict the Asian financial crisis or the contagion effect which is still being felt. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) is now forecasting that FY98 exports will be \$2.3 billion lower than FY97 sales and \$4.8 billion below the FY96 record of \$59.8 billion.

Also, because of the strength of our national economy relative to most other countries, the value of our currency relative to others now makes our exports less price-competitive in Asian markets than our competitor exporters like Canada, Australia, Brazil, or the nations of the European Union. Thus, there is not only a dramatically reduced agricultural export market in Asia, we are also getting a reduced portion of the remaining Asian import business.

This Member continues to support the flexibility offered by the 1996 Agriculture Market Transition Act and does not want to see a return to the policies of the past. Farmers certainly appreciate the freedom to plant what they want and for the most part do not want to encounter unnecessary restrictions and bureaucracy. However, proposed changes, such as removing the loan rate caps would likely cause intermediate and long-term problems. A recent study prepared by the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute at the University of Missouri and Iowa State University concluded that such a change would lead to larger supplies and lower prices in the future.

This Member supports the Pomeroy motion to recommit with instructions which proposed that the conferees should "increase the assistance available to family farmers suffering economic loss as a result of record low prices, deteriorating market conditions and/or natural disasters."

In addition, this Member is supportive of recent actions which are designed to assist farmers during these difficult times. For example, this Member was supportive of the legislation which makes \$5.5 billion in current FY99 Farm Act payments to farmers available at an earlier date on October 1, 1998. This action will significantly expedite these much needed payments.

More must be done for our nation's farmers and this Member believes it almost certainly now will be necessary to approve an emergency supplemental appropriation to assist farmers early next year, because the emergency assistance to farmers is not sufficient given the wholly unexpected export conditions in Asia and world markets and very low commodity prices they face.

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SPEECH OF

**HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, October 2, 1998*

Mrs. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill and to commend Chairman SKEEN for his dedication and commitment to the Agriculture Appropriations process.

He and Senate Subcommittee Chairman, Mr. COCHRAN, along with the full committee chairmen, Mr. LIVINGSTON in the House and Mr. STEVENS in the Senate have worked tirelessly throughout the entire process and, specifically, during conference proceedings.

The conferees did not succumb to outside pressures and stood firm against terrorist countries and parish states. They understood the tremendous differences between dealings with democratically elected governments versus attempts to negotiate with and support terrorist states such as the Castro regime in Cuba—that is what the provision by Senator DODD would have done.

The conferees understood that reality and eliminated the Dodd provision. The House and Senate conferees heard the rhetoric used by supporters of the Dodd provision but, when they heard the facts, they did what was right for the American people and for their security.

The conferees were clear on what they were dealing with when talking about Fidel Castro. They knew that Castro had recently rejected a U.S. proposal to provide donated aid to needy Cubans because it was coming from the United States. Even the North Korean dictatorship could not bring itself to deny aid for its people.

The conferees were fully aware of the fact that U.S. policy does not deny food and medicine to the Cuban people; that U.S. policy supports the Cuban people while punishing the dictator that enslaves them.

From a practical standpoint, the conferees understood that Castro does not have the

money to purchase food because Castro's socialist economy is a dismal failure.

As far as "credits", the conferees were aware of the fact that Castro has the highest per capita debt in Latin America, rendering Cuba unworthy of credit from any country or international lender in the world. The Dodd provision would have made the U.S. the laughing stock of the world. It would have turned the U.S. into the only country in the world offering to extend credits to Fidel Castro.

The conferees recalled the fact that just a few weeks ago, the FBI rounded up 10 Cuban spies working to obtain intelligence from three U.S. military bases in South Florida.

With the enemy at our doorstep; with Castro agents gnawing at U.S. domestic security; there were those who actually wanted to appease the oppressive Castro regime by supporting the Dodd provision.

But again, the majority of the conferees could not, would not be fooled. They dropped the Dodd provision from the Agriculture Appropriations bill.

I appreciate their cooperation throughout the last couple of months, and praise them for their commitment to what is right and just. On behalf of the Cuban people and the people of the terrorist and oppressive regimes around the world, thank you.

SALUTING THE MEMORY OF  
SANDY ANDREWS

**HON. CHARLES H. TAYLOR**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, October 5, 1998*

Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, in 1991, a young woman in my district, Sandy Andrews, was tragically killed when a train struck her vehicle at a railroad crossing.

But sometimes, out of such tragedies, come good things.

Sandy Andrews was active in youth sports in North Cove, North Carolina, where she lived with her husband and three sons. So to honor her memory, her family donated approximately 10 acres along U.S. Highway 221 for building a park. With the involvement of the McDowell County government, many volunteers, and local grant monies, that park was built.

On Saturday, September 12, 1998, the Sandy Andrews Memorial Park was opened, providing a ball field with dugouts, a playground, basketball court, and a volleyball court.

In this day when so many senseless tragedies occur, the building of this park is a tribute to both the memory of Sandy Andrews, and the resolution of her family and her community to honor her memory.

It is an honor to share the story of that tribute with my colleagues today.

[From the McDowell News, Sept. 14, 1998]  
FAMILY HOPES MEMORIAL PARK WILL BENEFIT  
COUNTY'S CHILDREN  
(By Ragan Robinson)

A host of North Cove residents and county officials were on hand for the dedications of the Sandy Andrews Memorial Park Saturday morning.

Approximately 10 acres of land located on U.S. 221 North was donated for the park by Roger, Tom and Louis Andrews.